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Application Number

09-903095

Filed

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US006620046B2

(12) **United States Patent**  
**Rowe**

(10) Patent No.: **US 6,620,046 B2**  
(45) Date of Patent: **Sep. 16, 2003**

*Est. only*

(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR FUNDING AND AWARDING BONUSES IN A GAMING ENVIRONMENT**

(75) Inventor: **Rick Rowe, Reno, NV (US)**

(73) Assignee: **IGT, Reno, NV (US)**

(\*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **09/965,908**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 27, 2001**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2003/0013513 A1 Jan. 16, 2003

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 09/903,095, filed on Jul. 10, 2001.

(51) Int. Cl. <sup>7</sup> ..... **A63F 9/24**

(52) U.S. Cl. ..... **463/23**

(58) Field of Search ..... **463/25, 40, 41, 463/42**

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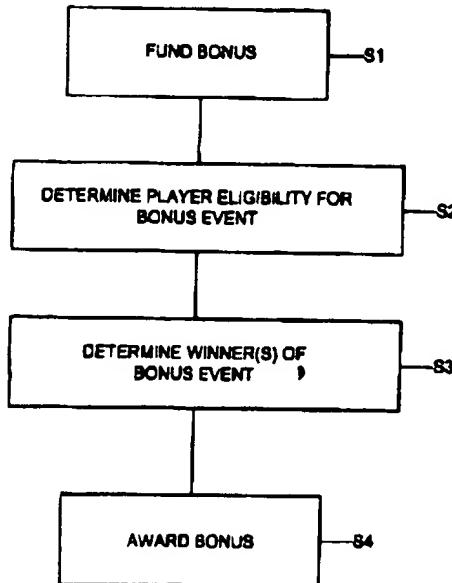
**Primary Examiner—Michael O'Neill**

(74) **Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Weide & Miller, Ltd.**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method and system are provided for awarding bonuses in a gaming environment. The system includes gaming machines associated with a player tracking host and a bonus system host. Each gaming machine has a player tracking device. In accordance with a method, a bonus is funded independently of specific wagers placed at the gaming machines. The bonus system host configures bonus event information which is presented via the player tracking devices of the gaming machines. In the event a player is a bonus event winner, bonus award information is transmitted to the player via the player tracking device. The bonus is awarded based on criteria independent of the outcome of a game played by the player at the gaming machine. The system and method provide for the award of bonuses independent of the configuration of the games the gaming machine presents, player wagers or game outcome.

11 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets



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